

A COLONIAL COCOON IN THE GENUS *APION* (CURCULIONIDAE)

By ARTHUR C. SMITH

Cornell University, Ithaca, N. Y.

While engaged in research on the ecology and control of the *Apion* Pod Weevil for the Mexican Agricultural Program of the Rockefeller Foundation, a unique case of colonial cocoon-making was discovered. It appears to be the first such case reported in the genus *Apion*.

In Mexico there are two common species of curculionids in this genus which occurs as pests on the cultivated bean *Phaseolis vulgaris* L. The adult beetles are quite similar in appearance, and anatomical details must be checked carefully with a hand lens or microscope in order to distinguish the two species. Biologically, however, the two species are quite distinct. In both, the eggs are deposited in the side-wall tissues of the bean pod when it is quite small. In the case of *Apion godmani* Wagner*, the eggs are placed at random one at a time up and down the bean pod. From one to twenty eggs may be deposited in a pod. In *Apion aurichalceum* Wagner*, 30 to 130 eggs may be deposited in the pod, frequently with a preference being shown for the tip of the pod.

The growth of the larva from the first to last instar is quite similar in the two species as far as is known. However, the larvae of *A. aurichalceum* are found all crowded together in one place in the pod, whereas the larvae of *A. godmani* are distributed evenly throughout the pod.

*I am indebted to Mr. J. Balfour-Browne, Senior Scientific Officer, Department of Entomology, British Museum (Natural History) for the identification of these two species, and for calling my attention to the rarity of this phenomenon.

Plate I, figures 1-3, Cocoons and Pupae of *Apion*.

Fig. 1.—Bean pod showing cocoons of *Apion godmani*. Fig. 2.—Bean pod showing colonial cocoon and pupae of *Apion aurichalceum*. Fig. 3.—Colonial cocoon of *Apion aurichalceum* removed from pod.

